

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 AID-20 CU-04 OPR-02 DRC-01

NIC-01 PC-04 /158 W

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P R 280933Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1285

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7981

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJECT: STUDENT SITUATION

REF: SEOUL 7952

1. AN ATTEMPTED MARCH OFF CAMPUS BY ABOUT 3,000 GIRL STUDENTS OF EHWA UNIVERSITY WAS THE MAIN DEVELOPMENT IN NOV 28 STUDENT PROTESTS. GIRLS WENT ABOUT ONE-FIFTH OF A MILE UNTIL RIOT POLICE BLOCKED THEIR WAY. GIRLS THEN SAT DOWN ON STREET. POLICE ATTEMPTS TO DISPERSE THEM WITH TEAR GAS HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED AS OF NIGHTFALL. RADIO NEWS REPORTED THAT EHWA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT KIM OK-KIL WAS TEAR GASSED. GIRLS' DEMANDS REPORTEDLY INCLUDED RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY, FREE ARRESTED STUDENTS, AND END ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON JAPAN.

2. ON -CAMPUS PROTEST MEETINGS OCCURRED AT KONKUK, DONGKUK AND HANYANG UNIVERSITIES. KONKUK RALLY HAD ABOUT 700 PARTICIPANTS WHO FORCED THEIR WAY ONTO CAMPUS IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY FOUND THAT SCHOOL AUTHORITIES HAD SUSPENDED FINAL EXAMS AND LOCKED THE GATES. OTHER RALLIES HAD 100 OR LESS.

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3. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION NOV 27 ANNOUNCED REMOVAL OF

SCHOLARSHIP BUREAU CHIEF AND INDICATED HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTROVERSIAL RECOMMENDATION TO MAKE ORDERLY BEHAVIOR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCHOLASTIC EXCELLENCE IN AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS. MINISTRY PROMISED TO ISSUE A REVISED PLAN WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

4. COMMENT: EHWA UNIVERSITY DEMONSTRATION IS ANOTHER "ESCALATION" IN CONTINUING STUDENT PROTEST ACTIONS.

5. AS EARLIER REPORTED, GOVT HAS BEEN HOPING THAT SHUTDOWN OF CLASSES AND EARLY EXAMS WOULD LEAD TO "DE FACTO" CLOSING OF SCHOOLS AND WITHERING AWAY OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. SO FAR THIS HAS NOT WORKED. AT THIS POINT IT APPEARS THAT AS LONG AS STUDENTS GATHER ON CAMPUS THEY ARE DETERMINED TO DEMONSTRATE.

6. IN PAST WEEKS, FOCUS OF GOVT AND PUBLIC CONCERN HAS INCREASINGLY SHIFTED TO QUESTION OF WHAT STUDENTS WILL DO IN THE SPRING SEMESTER. HOWEVER, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS POINTS UP THE DEPTH OF STUDENT ANTI-GOVT ATTITUDES AND THEIR TENACITY IN CHALLENGING THE PARK GOVERNMENT. UNDERHILL

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